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A DAY IN TOWN.

BY A RAMBLER.

THE morning was gloomy, heavy, and louring, and I had destined myself to remain an entire day at home, polishing certain piquant passages in my Log Book, when my door opening, presented to my astonished sight, a tall figure enveloped in a box-coat and Belcher neck-kerchief. There was something in the fixed gaze of his dark eyes, which beamed from under a hat drawn down far upon his forehead, that awed me; and I instinctively hurried my wide spread MSS. into an open drawer, dreading lest the great unknown might be an angry author coming to take signal vengeance upon his writer in his den.

He slowly unbuttoned two dreadnoughts, and unfurling the banner of Boxiana from his neck, displayed the person of my wild and worthy friend, Frank F.— I was overjoyed to see him; years had rolled over since we met—and at the very moment I had been anticipating the merry evenings we should have, and the old recollections we should conjure up, for “we had heard the chimes at midnight;” but alas! how was I disappointed at his informing me, that his visit was to be of only twenty-four hour’s duration, and that he calculated upon my dedicating the entire day to showing him the lions of our far-famed city; he concluded a splendid panegyric upon my qualities as ciccone, by an enumeration of about five hundred persons with whom he had particular business, and about as many commissions, he should personally execute for a fair friend in the country.

I was thunderstruck at this announcement, and for some minutes felt like the worthy man described by Coleridge, in “the Ancient Mariner” impelled by two opposite destinies—

“The wedding guest,
Here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.”

And although I certainly did not hear the aforesaid bassoon, yet I mentally heard the muttered maledictions of an enraged Editor, and almost ejaculated—what shall I do? “Do!” said my friend, who caught the half-uttered words—“Do! why give me your best bowl of Bohea, and an infinite series of eggs and hot rolls, for I have been travelling all night, and have the appetite of a Boa.” This appeal was conclusive. I seated my friend beside me, and began talking over our plans for the day.—Now, you are not to suppose, most inquisitive and penetrating reader, that I had any tall unlicked cub of a country cousin to deal with, with whom I should dive into the bowels of the College kitchen, or scale up to the crown of the naval stlyte in Sackville-street—no, my friend knew the city as well as I, and only wished to see what changes, time and the march of intellect had made, since his last visit to our raking metropolis.

He was equally unambitious of walking the cold and comfortless corridors of the now deserted Custom-house, and indifferent to the charms of that Archimedes of spring locks, and ear trumpets, who reigns paramount in that splendid money office, which was erst the house of Legislature of Old Ireland.

Breakfast over, and having persuaded my friend to denude himself of certain heathen appendages to his dress, yclept cords and top boots, for a more reasonable mode of investing his lower man, we set out for the Four Courts, where Frank said he had some business to transact. On our

way he remarked the extreme filth and mudiness of our streets. My esprit de corps, as a Dublinite, was touched, and I triumphantly pointed to a placard which ornamented a wall before us: it ran thus—

“It having appeared expedient to His Majesty’s Ministers to place the Scavenging Corporation upon a new *footing*, and for the future to dispense with all cleansing of the streets of Dublin, on Friday next, the 30th instant, will be sold by auction, a great variety of mud-spoons, scrapers, shovels, spades, scoops, and scavengers, all which being very little used, are nearly as good as new.

“Also various Commissioners, Secretaries, Clerks, and other flag-officers, by inch of candle, if not previously disposed of by private contract.”

This satisfied my friend, who is a reasonable man; and we at length arrived at the Courts, when having soon dispatched our official business, we were, preparatory to our departure, making one tour of the hall, crowded with wigged barristers, keen-eyed attorneys, and pale litigants, when hearing the sound of merriment issue from the Court of Exchequer, I drew aside the curtain, and saw the saffron visaged Cheops-like figure of Baron S.—listening with imperturbable gravity to a cross-examination which convulsed the Court and even the crier with laughter.

Leaving this, we passed the King’s Bench, where the crowded doors and passages, not less than the sound of a Kerry accent, neatly dovetailed into a French pronunciation, uttering the singularly novel and unused quotation:—

“Great, glorious, and free,” told us that the Member for Clare was on his legs; and after a vain effort to get within the precincts of the Court, we left the building.

We now perambulated the streets for some hours, during which I took the opportunity of showing my friend the Turk in Grafton-street, and the tiger in the College of Surgeons:—returning thence, as we strolled up Westmorland-street and turned into Foot’s to replenish our respective mulls with unsophisticated Lundy, from the hands of that passionless pale-eyed

little old man, with the grey hair and the grey coat and the grey buttons, who must be the double of that celebrated *l’homme gris*, who persecuted Napoleon—he seems, indeed, as if he were a part of the machinery of the great globe itself, handing out pennyworths of snuff since the beginning of time—a large placard, setting forth the contents of “DUBLIN LITERARY GAZETTE,” caught my companion’s eye, and he immediately began discussing its merits—for he had seen it in the South. Question followed question, so rapidly, as to the names, characters, professions and pretensions of the various contributors, that I became fairly exhausted; when, perceiving that I knew more about that all-engrossing topic than I cared to own, he bluntly demanded, what do you mean by your Pentagonal? Little did he know, at the moment, the difficulty of answering that unfortunate and trying query—I endeavoured to evade it, as well I might, but it was in vain, and I was obliged to unfold the mysterious secret; in fact, said I, what these Pentagonal were meant to be, the editor himself, perhaps, knows; but I certainly do not; all I can say of the matter is, that about a fortnight since I received, while at breakfast, a note, commanding my attendance at the editor’s

I should prepare myself to be particularly brilliant and facetious in conversation, as “faith he’d print it.” A postscript hinting something savoury about devilled kidneys and *ponche rouge*, decided my ready acceptance of the invitation. After this I rode out, visited various public places, heard all the on dit of the day, and then returned to my lodgings, ordering my servant to deny me to all comers, being determined to bottle up my conversation for the evening, and not even trust myself to an interview with a member of the deaf and dumb institution.

At length it was evening, and I set out for the meeting. On my arrival, the hall-door was open, and I dashed at once up stairs—pushed into the *Sanctum*—and guess my surprise on finding the room in almost total darkness. There was, it is true, a large blazing fire, and before it sat the fat, round, happy little figure of the Editor—the prince o’ critics, and the wale o’ men—fast asleep. I pulled out my watch, and then discovered that I had mistaken the time, and had in my impatience come an hour too soon. I lighted a candle, and began to search, amid a mountain of loosely-piled papers, to which Ossa was a wart, for a printed book; for I scrupled to wake the Editor—fatigued and exhausted as I knew he was—having that day scribbled the leading articles for three first-rate London Periodicals—Reviews for Blackwood, and the two Foreign Quarterly—written the Irish for the London University Magazine—and composed all the miscellaneous articles for the Christian Examiner, as well as the original poetry for three weekly journals. In my search for some book to while away the time, my eye rested upon two large packets, which peeped most invitingly from the Editor’s pocket, and though in ordinary cases I detest the sight of an original MS. in the intensity of my curiosity and idleness I withdrew this quietly, and without disturbing him—one I found to be a collection of rejected articles, tied with a large piece of black tape, and labelled—ruinous—swamp the concern in a week; the other, I blush to confess it, was headed—méms. for conversa. at the first Pentag.

I was so utterly horrified at the deliberate baseness of this *unheard-of* proceeding, that in my indignation I resolved to forego the peppered kidneys, and took my departure that moment.

But, said my friend, what did you do with the premeditated Balaam? Nothing, as yet, said I—but I am now in treaty for it with the Editor of the—Magazine, whose fortune it would make; but if he should be stupid enough to refuse the cool hundred, which is all I ask, I shall have an opportunity some of these days, when our Editor is off to fox-hunt or cock-shoot in the country, and shew him up in his own Gazette as he deserves. My friend, thereupon, entered into a minute criticism of the contents of the Gazette, and left nothing unnoticed, from the “Gentle Reader,” in No. I. to the “most dear Lady,” in No. V.

But with all the generalship of your Editor, said he, and he certainly does seem rather a knowing hand, I observe that though the paper is in general very nicely “got up,” there are sometimes typographical mistakes which mar the effect of the most intellectual passages, and which a little common attention might certainly prevent. The article on the Quarterly, for example, in your last, was in one or two places quite unintelligible. Much as I was

enraged with the Aristarchus of the Gazette, for his unprincipled enormity in the matter of the Pentags, a sense of justice constrained me to vindicate him from this ill-founded charge, by assuring my friend, that if, according to the Northern proverb, he has need o' a lang-shankit spune that sups kail wi' the deil, so he requires a sharp-pointed pen who corrects proofs for him, and the deuce of it is, my dear fellow, I added, that after you have revised your proof as clean as a whistle, and got to bed with eyes and fingers wearied and aching at four o'clock in the morning, you find next day, as I know by sad experience, that the paper is published with half your corrections newly blundered, and the last state of your article is worse than the first. Besides, continued I, forgetting my just causes of indignation, and waxing warm in my advocacy of him whom I once rejoiced to call my friend, you know such *infernal* concerns are quite too "base and mechanical" for the refined and elevated mind of our illustrious president.

By this time we had reached Hayes's, and dinner time. Shades of Kitchener, how odiferous is Calipash—how restorative Mulla-gatawny. It is not generally known, that Hayes is in possession of the receipt for that valuable sauce, so pathetically described in the Almanach des Gourmands, as one with which "On peut manger son pere," and although neither I, nor my esteemed friend, had the slightest intention of such an unfilial repast, yet we did command ourselves to the tender mercies of the he-cook—and elbowing our way through some dozen of booted, spurred, moustached, and spruce-looking heroes, reached a table in safety.

Sans badinage, Hayes's is the only dining house in town for single gentlemen or parties quarrees—Morrison's is absolute starvation without you dine with the Beefsteak Club, or are vulgar enough for a civic fest.

In the evening we thought of the play, and adjourned to the Theatre. Oh for words to express my esteem and admiration of the manager, he has worked a great and important revolution—the Theatre is no longer the scene of bustle and confusion, no longer is heard the din turmoil and incessant roll of carriages arriving and setting down, there is no crushing, or squeezing, no losing of shawls, and shoes, wigs and waistcoats, all is peaceful, and quiet as the Custom-house, we ascended the broad and dimly lighted stair of the box entrance, to wake the sleeping check taker at the top, and request his acceptance of our billet: we paced the long lobby, and the saloon, but still all was sad and deserted, the only living thing we encountered was a broad fat figure, with a seal skin cap, sucking an orange behind a counter, thinking most probably that home consumption is preferable to dependance upon a foreign market; we placed ourselves in a box near the stage, the reason of our selection being that it was the only one inhabited. Two grave looking old gentlemen occupied the seat before us, whom by their conversation we discovered to be bond-holders, mourning over the melancholy prospects of the house,

Lulled by the drowsy orchestra, in which our old friend the Bass viol seemed to have taken an opiate, we soon fell asleep, and did not awake till it was time to dress for Lady L's—soirée, and when next we meet, you shall hear how we spent our evening in town.

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Paris, January 30, 1830.

A 17th letter from M. Champollion, dated Thebes, June 26th, appears in the Moniteur of Wednesday. M. Champollion announces in this letter having paid a visit to a perfect little temple, called the little temple of Isis, near Ameophiom. Some of the paintings representing Ptolemy Soter the 2nd, the goddess Hathor (Venus) and others, are as perfect as if they had been recently produced, and appear to be in a very good style. From the painting and the sculpture, M. Champollion supposes that this temple was erected by the fifth Ptolemy, two hundred years before Christ. M. Champollion's letter which is very long, is entirely devoted to a description of the temple, which would be uninteresting to the general reader.

A sudden thaw has come on since I last wrote to you; but I do not think it will be of long duration, for it has been partial; and persons most conversant with meteorological affairs state, that we may expect a further and even more severe frost in February.

It has been for some time remarked, that whilst great encouragement was given in Paris to painters, the art of engraving was rapidly losing ground. The publication of the London Annuals, with their splendid graphic illustrations, has, however, created a proper spirit of emulation here; and we may hope to see in another year or two, the same encouragement given to engravers as in England. For the purpose of encouraging this art, a society has just been formed, with a capital of 200,000 francs, which is to be applied to the purchase of engravings, and the distribution of medals and rewards, to successful candidates for the approbation of the society. There are various regulations by which it is expected to keep up the funds of the society, so as not only to maintain the present rate of encouragements and prizes, but even to add to them considerably. The king, and some other members of the royal family, warmly patronize this institution.

Great efforts are making by the French ministry to improve the Cotton and Woollen manufactures: for this purpose persons have been despatched to England, to obtain information; and it is intended to offer premiums for various improvements in the different branches of cotton manufactures.

The Theatres have, on the whole, been pretty well attended, notwithstanding the severity of the weather; but several of them are notoriously in a state of bankruptcy. A good deal of interest has been excited among Theatrical persons, by an application made by the celebrated actress, Jenny Colon, to have the marriage between her and M. Lafonte, annulled, on the ground of its having been contracted without the consent of the mother of Mademoiselle Colon. This marriage, it appears, took place in England last year; and as Mademoiselle Colon was abundantly of age, there would have been no ground for the present application on the score of the non-consent of the mother, but that M. Lafonte was as tired of a wedded life as his wife, and therefore offered no opposition; the consequence was that the lady's prayer was granted.

Thine, X.

London, February 2, 1830.

No work of particular interest has been published since I last wrote you; several, however, are announced for early publication. In the absence of other information, you may not dislike to receive some particulars respecting the new Literary Union Club, slight notices of which have appeared in the newspapers.—This Club, which has now nearly 600 members, was established by Mr. Campbell, the poet, for the purpose of bringing together literary men, and forming a sort of Republic of letters. Originally the entrance money was only 2 guineas, and the yearly subscription 4 guineas; the admission has now been increased to 4 guineas, but without any addition to the yearly subscription. All persons of respectability connected with literature, and also private persons not in trade, are eligible to become members. Among those already on the list, are several persons of title, officers of rank, in the army and navy, members of Parliament, &c. Reporters upon the public press, are excluded, it being considered, that although many of these persons are highly respectable, there are others, who are not so; and, therefore, it would be better to exclude them altogether.—The Committee have engaged the old Athenaeum Club house in Regent-street; but they have been able as yet, only to fit up one room for the reception of the members. In a few days, however, the drawing-rooms will be opened; and in March, the dining-rooms will also be ready.

It is intended that the eating part should be conducted with every regard to economy, but that luxuries shall be provided; and that the cooking shall be as perfect as possible. Their head cook is to receive £300 per annum; and the wines and provisions are to be of the finest quality; yet is expected, that a good dinner of fish, poultry or joint, tart, &c. with a pint of excellent wine, may be had for about 3s. 6d.; coffee, and all other refreshments, will be on the same economical scale. There is to be a conversazione once a week; and it is intended, if possible, to have similar institutions formed in the different capitals of Europe, so that literary men may in their travels find themselves at no loss for good society. The plan has been communicated to some of the leading persons among the literati and artists of Paris and Vienna; and it is expected that Literary Union Clubs on the same principle, will soon be established there. An idea is entertained of having a peculiar waistcoat, to be worn by the members for evening dress in public; but this has not yet been regularly discussed in the committee.

The cold continues to be intense: but it has been remarked by medical men, that the great severity of the weather has not been attended with such fatal effects upon aged and infirm persons, as on former occasions.

The Theatres are pretty well attended; but of the two large ones, the favourite on the whole, excepting the performances of Miss Kemble, appears to be Drury-lane. At Covent Garden, however, the expenditure is said to be less than at Drury-lane, the system of nightly salaries having been put an end to—except in the engagements of Miss Fanny Kemble, and Lady William Lennox, the former of whom has £50 per night, and the latter, I believe £20. At Drury-lane, Mr. Keane is said to have £60 per night;—an enormous sum certainly upon the whole: but he appears to be worth it to the manager.